



Worth More Than This

by Catriona Johnson

A dramatic difference between the earnings of female and male students persists, according to an annual study on student summer employment for UVic.

Dr. Roy Watson's 1988 Report on Summer Employment, conducted last September, states that 30.1 percent of men earned over \$6,000 during the sixteen weeks of summer break, while only 6.7 percent of women earned that amount. As well, this category of earnings represents by far the largest concentration of men, yet the largest concentration of women, 27.3 percent, earned the lowest wages — under \$3,000 during the break.

Of those surveyed, 51 percent of women expected to cover less than one quarter of their educational costs through summer employment, compared to only 32.4 percent of their male counterparts who expected the same level of savings.

Further proving that the discrepancy is gender based, Dr. Watson of the Sociology Department explains that there is no variation in earnings between students in the humanities and those in the sciences. Says Watson, "I was interested in trying to

explore if there were differences in students from various faculties, but in fact there are no real discrepancies there."

Only slightly more men entered the labour force than women (94 compared to 92.5 percent), yet women are far less likely to find full-time work than men; a considerable gap of 27.8 percent for women compared to 34.9 percent for men.

Pam Frache, Pacific Region Women's Liaison for the Canadian Federation of Students, voices her concern that the results show women are less likely to be able to make enough money to finance their education.

"The whole system discriminates against women," states Frache. "They are more likely to take out loans, leading to larger debt loads when finished their education."

The survey also shows that women, in order to lessen the financial burden of an education, are more likely to continue working part-time while attending university.

Adds Frache, "Their studies suffer while in school because of part-time employment."

Frache cites pay equity as progressive legislation to cope with overt discrimination in pay scales, and she hopes the voluntary affir-

mative action policy of the public service will soon become mandatory and grow to include the private sector as well. She stresses the need for this as the educational system itself has yet to become an equalizing or liberating force in the job market.

Dr. Christine St. Peter of the Women Studies Program notes that despite these problems, women still earn more awards for high academic achievement than do men.

Dr. St. Peter offers one method of equalizing the financial status of female and male students. "This financial hardship is part of a larger systemic discrimination against women in our society. Women only earn about 60 cents to the male dollar, and yet they are expected to pay off their student loans to the full amount, even though most of them will not be able to earn as much as their male counterparts.

"Since women's wages are only two thirds of men's, statistically, women students should have to pay back only that percentage of the loans, otherwise their financial disadvantage will be perpetuated throughout a lifetime." *



Women for Economic Survival

by Ann McKeown

Ever hopeful of a glorious financial future, our local business community launches off the new convention centre beside the Empress Hotel today. Some participants of the three day *Visions Victoria* promotion may be surprised to see that included among the panel are island anti-poverty activists Women for Economic Survival.

One of WES' hundred-plus collective members, Dr. Josephine Payne-O'Connor speculates about the convention, "I suspect some will try to overlook the really serious problems, and housing is one concrete example of an ongoing lack of planning and concern with children and families."

If there is one message WES wants to impart during *Visions Victoria*, Payne-O'Connor sums it up, "Inadequate housing is dangerous housing. It makes kids sick. We are not just talking inconvenience, we are talking risk. Risk is having to walk ten blocks in the winter with inadequate clothing to catch the bus or just to get extra diapers or milk. Poverty kills, and women with inadequate housing are seeing this first hand."

In a 1985 joint survey between non-profit WES and the Community Council of Greater Victoria, 200 women living below the poverty line reported that their most urgent concern was the lack of affordable housing for single parent families.

Payne-O'Connor explains that the situation has only worsened since. "A critical moment for low income housing has come. We are going to be insisting at the conference on focussing on what you could consider the dark side — the side that tends to get glossed over. We feel that it is critical that this be on the agenda at this conference and that such work continue after it ends."

One-third of the respondents from WES' survey claimed to use food banks in order to supplement their monthly income. As well, WES' research correlates with other studies, as nearly all of the women urgently wanted the chance to support themselves and their children.

Victoria remains no exception to Canadian statistics which cite that over 60 percent of this country's impoverished citizens are women. Single mothers are especially at risk as, according to the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 85 percent of single-parent families are headed by women, while 47 percent of these families live below the poverty line.

Although many women work full-time, they run a greater risk than men do of receiving paychecks which condemn them to poverty. The majority of B.C.'s female labour force, for example, remains concentrated in the lowest paid occupations — clerical and service.

During this convention, WES will be pressing for a balance between commercial development and people's living needs, such as more city parks and downtown supermarkets. With representatives from all economic stratas, WES wants every commercial development project in the city to pay a portion of development profit into a fund for residential housing.

Payne-O'Connor rationalizes that this will provide customers for stores and clients for business.

She continues, "We have a city designed as though children don't exist. We have a concept of the city as a place of business, a place to visit. But we often forget that not only do people live there in the city and near to the city, but that many of them are children." Payne-O'Connor refers to examples such as public transit's inability to accommodate small children and the lack of day-care facilities in shops.

Brishkai Lund, WES member and UVic's program coordinator for Humanities and Social Sciences, identifies some barriers to

single mothers included in WES' *Visions Victoria* presentation: "When you look at access programs in B.C. in which many women benefitted, most of these programs have been reduced. If there's a lack of day-care facilities, or if there are fewer dollars for part-time learners, there's another door closed."

Lund feels that more encouragement is needed throughout the community and here at UVic to make poverty a legitimate topic for study. "It shouldn't be absent from our curriculum, it shouldn't be absent from our planning and it shouldn't be absent in our thinking when we are doing budgets." *

Feminism and Deep Ecology: Contingency and Connection

by Kate Sandilands

As deep ecologist Arne Naess noted in his January 11 lecture at UVic, there exists important political connections between movements which seek to heal the Earth and movements for social justice. When questioned, he conceded a particular link between deep ecology and feminism; both movements, he suggested, share a strong sense of "compassion" for the "underdog".

I would suggest that, in fact, the connection between feminism and deep ecology goes much deeper than such a vague, emotional tie. (Although, to his credit, Naess' written work displays considerable theoretical complexity, such an understanding was not apparent in his comments on the feminist/environmentalist connection on January 11.)

Such links occur on three major levels: the theoretical, the practical and the political. This article, although by no means complete, will outline some of the connections which have been made on these levels, in particular those of ecofeminist theorists and activists.

On the most obvious level, revolutionary feminism and deep ecology share a theoretical understanding of the need for profound and systemic change in order to achieve, respectively, liberation and autonomy for women, full social equality, and ecological survival. In both cases, piecemeal reforms are perceived as band-aid measures which, although perhaps useful in averting immediate catastrophe, are not adequate long-term solutions. Both theoretical currents stress the need for a comprehensive and historical understanding of the contemporary

plights of women and nature in order to articulate strategy for the radical change essential for any desirable future.

I cannot here begin to sketch either feminist or ecological theory in detail, let alone to elucidate their stated and potential theoretical affinities exhaustively; however, a number of general areas of conceptual connection are apparent. On a material level, the histories of women and nature as "oppressed groups" are not only parallel but are inextricably intertwined; the particular ways in which women are exploited depends largely on the ways in which a given society utilizes natural resources.

Stated another way, technologies of resource exploitation play a determining role in the gendered division of both "productive" and "reproductive" labour — we can-

not understand women's work without understanding the uses toward which a society directs natural resources. Conversely, we cannot understand the particular ways in which a society exploits the natural environment without

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Trapped At Home

by Elizabeth Loughran

The common perception of home being a safe place is little more than a cruel joke for one out of five women in Victoria with male partners. A recent UVic survey confirms that this city is fostering the same level of tolerance toward wife assault as is the rest of Canada.

Across the nation fifty percent of domestic calls answered by police are cases of wife assault, and each year over ten percent of homicide victims are murdered by their spouses — nearly *all* of these committed by men.

Elise Wickson, (MA of Sociology, UVic) reports that 18.8 percent of two-hundred female survey recipients claim they are targets for their partners' verbal and physical fits of violent rage.

Wickson's report also confirms that men who attack their partners come from every economic, ethnic and racial background. "This is truly egalitarian in nature," she states.

Recent high profile examples of this include a Halifax family court judge who is being divorced and sued by his wife on the grounds of physical assault, and Kirby Inwood, an Ontario advertising executive who received a thirty-day sentence for beating his year-old son and a suspended sentence for attacking his wife.

Wickson believes previous studies limited to women already



in shelters have mislead researchers to conclude such women to be innately masochistic. Explains Wickson, "Women who are battered undergo the same process used in concentration camps and in torture methods, producing the result of a person literally becoming incapable to do anything to save her own life."

Jay Cross, a graduate student in

UVic's Sociology Department agrees. "We should be asking about what happens *before* the battering starts, because it's likely that the battering itself *causes* the 'so called' personality traits. What we have measured in the past is not necessarily the personalities of battered women, but rather the *effects* on the personality *from* the battering." Adds Cross, "Studies of emotional abuse have been included in research on elder and child abuse, but have not been included in studies on wife abuse."

Neglectful ambivalence toward this crime extends beyond our academic institutions. For example, Canadians are legally obligated to report any suspected case of child abuse, yet we are not required to do the same when we suspect wife assault.

Susan Robinson of the Victoria Women's Transition House explains that while the law requires police to report any case of battering, it is rarely enforced. "The number of charges we see laid is so small." She concludes "Women just get deterred every step of the way," considering that only two percent of men who batter ever get sentenced.

*Ed. Note: For emergencies or counselling call Transition House, 385-6611. Also, Inwood's defence lawyer, Edward Greenspan, is coming to speak as an "expert" on domestic violence. Bring your questions! Feb. 7, 5:30 pm, Begbie 159. **

Take This Man

by Mojgan Diba

When I was in grade eight and lived in the Middle East, a girl who was in my class was forced to marry a man she did not know. Her father had borrowed some money from someone and he was unable to return the money; so he gave his daughter instead. I remember how miserable she was, and how she later had to give up school because her husband did not want her to be educated.

How does the idea of being forced into marriage strike you? I am sure you would be horrified if your parents told you one day that have selected a *suitable* spouse for you, and if you refuse to marry him/her they will disown you.

For most Canadian people this is an unlikely event; however, for the Canadian communities whose roots are from the Middle East this is still a common practice.

These parents, who want the best for their children, are often unaware that they cause a lot of anguish for them. They arrange for their son or daughter to meet and marry a person of *their* choice. (Some parents choose a spouse for their child when s/he is born.) They do not consider their child's feelings regarding the spouse they have selected for her/him.

Even if they become aware that, for example, their daughter hates the man they have chosen for her, they either disregard it, or they

hope that she will grow to love him. If this same daughter is so bold as to refuse to marry the man chosen for her, she risks being ostracized from her family.

Most Middle Eastern parents want their child to marry a person who believes in the same religion and comes from the same background or class. Many of these parents find it hard to communicate with an English speaking relative who may not understand their customs and their culture. Furthermore, while divorce is certainly a traumatic experience for many Canadians, within the Middle Eastern community, "Til death do us part" is the only respectable option.

Consequently, they prefer their child to marry someone from their own country who will never consider getting a divorce no matter how miserable s/he may be. Because of their culture, and because of the way they have been brought up, Middle Eastern parents cannot accept the Western culture, even if they could understand it.

It is ironic that in our century some women and men want their marriages to be arranged. There are many reasons for this. First, a woman is not allowed to 'date' men, because if she did, according to the Middle Eastern culture, she would be no better than a prostitute. So naturally the chances of her meeting a man whom she will like is almost non-

existent. Therefore, instead of becoming an 'old maid', she will agree to marry whomever her parents choose for her.

Second, a man who has been brought up within the same culture, usually finds Western women very bold and liberal. Therefore, he prefers to ask his family to find him a woman who will be virtuous and subservient.

It is often easier for the son to accept an arranged marriage than it is for the daughter. The man usually gets to see the picture of his future bride, whereas the woman usually does not know what her future husband looks like. As well, the man can choose whether or not he would like to marry the woman whose picture he has seen. On the other hand, the woman has no choice but to marry the man selected for her if her parents desire the match.

It is hard to believe that in this country arranged marriages remain common among Middle Easterners. Too often Middle Eastern women are simply victims of this practice. They have seen Western women and they have observed the freedom these women have relative to Middle Eastern culture.

Most importantly, they have learned that in this country many people actually *strive* to attain equality between women and men. Therefore, it is especially hard for them to accept the rules of their parents' country when they can see how wrong those rules are.

Unfortunately, these women have nowhere to turn. They are afraid of losing their families, and they are sometimes unaware of the Canadian laws which allow them to work and live independently of their parents; albeit they must brave a job market. My advice to them is: do not be afraid, and do not allow your family to force you into a marriage which you may regret for the rest of your life. *



You may have noticed that the past four issues of *The Emily* (and this one, too) have included an image of a dragon alongside our logo. The reason behind the use of this ancient mythic creature is not so haphazard as it might seem at first glance. According to the Eastern astrological system, we have all been living in the "year of the dragon" since February 17, 1988, and we will be entering the next lunar-calendar "sign" on February 6, 1989. The representative creature for the coming year is the snake.

I am a wood-dragon woman. In the Chinese system (which combines twelve 'animals' and fire 'elements') the wood-dragon year comes only once in sixty years. The recently "transformed" Salvador Dali was a wood-dragon, and if you were born between February 13, 1964 and February 1, 1965 on the western calendar, then you are too. If you were born between February 2, 1965 and January 20, 1966, then you are a wood-snake.

Western patriarchal imagists have turned both the dragon and the snake into symbols of "evil", just as they have denigrated women as whore-temptresses who manipulate through their sexual power. This is a fear based interpretation which is far removed from the ancient and respectful view of dragons and snakes.

Scientifically speaking, there is also archeological evidence from Crete which concludes that snakes were kept in homes, both as rodent control and as pets. They were revered in connection with the highly prominent Snake-Goddess, and were always associated with a female deity. In ancient Egypt, the cobra was a typical part of a pharaoh's head-dress, and is likely a symbol of visionary capabilities since the head of the snake appears over the "third-eye" chakra, the vision centre.

In many mediterranean cultures venomous snakes — especially vipers — were once thought to have great healing powers. Medicines made from their bodies were greatly sought after as cures for a variety of ills — a practice that survived until a few centuries ago. It is thought that snakes were powerful transformers and were used to bring about a more potent energy field which would be used in healing.

Ancient Greeks considered certain snakes to be sacred to Asclepius, the divine healer, who was often depicted either with an attendant serpent or carrying a wand with a snake coiled around it. This symbol evolved into the caduceus, which remains internationally recognized as the insignia of modern physicians.

One possible explanation for the ancient snake-as-healer image is simply its voracious appetite for rodents which (as we know now) are carriers of many diseases, such as the bubonic plague. Rodent hunting snakes that devour rats and mice around farms are an important economic factor as well. Large amounts of grain and feed are lost due to rodents wherever the local snake population is decimated.

We must remember that all creatures are valuable. Just as men must stop acting as if they were "better" than women, we as humans must stop acting as if we are more valuable than earth's other creatures. There is a dire need at present to re-connect with living beings in a way that is respectful, not fear motivated. This is especially true of snakes, insects, and creatures like termites, all of whom have very specific and necessary contributions toward the wellbeing of this planet.

The innate cyclical self-transformative power of the snake is intimately connected to woman's ability to ovulate, menstruate and give birth. The patriarchal culture has a strong fear of this entire re/generation process, and has thus devalued woman's cycles and sexual contact; indeed, it has made us "dirty". Further, this fear is due to the apparent lack of control over the re/generative process and is especially evident in recent reproductive technology practices which are performed largely by male scientists who, as we all know, cannot experience the special powers of re/generation on a physical level themselves.

Fear of snakes may have come originally from poisonous snakes' ability to kill a perfectly healthy human nearly instantly with only one small bite. Yet among cultures that live more harmoniously with the planet's creatures, it seems that such is not the case. Perhaps the best example is the traditional Hopi Snake Dance, which is performed with rattlesnakes — their venom fangs still intact — slung around the dancer's neck or arms. Despite the ever-present dangers in handling the reptiles, bites are extremely rare, and after the ceremony the rattlesnakes are always released unharmed.

Some people regard the snake as a supernatural creature because it lives for such a long time and renews itself by shedding its skin for a new one each time the old one becomes too restrictive. This particular trait symbolizes the ability to be "reborn", and to emerge from conflict with restored vigor. The lidless eyes of the snake were thought to be brighter than any other creature, and thus symbolized vigilance. The image: a grandmother watching over a sick child through the long night.

Spiritually, the dragon-snake is representative of the "kundalini" energy located at the seat of the spine, and (as is typical of the unseen in this culture) is often misunderstood or feared. The christian myth of the snake in the garden of eden is also largely responsible for the erasure of the highly spiritual aspects of snakes, women, and sexuality. It has replaced respect with fear.

Perhaps one of the reasons I'm not queasy about snakes emerges from the fact that as a small child, my father was a biologist who always had an entourage of creatures around the house. I grew up thinking it was perfectly natural to associate with everything from mealworm colonies to birds with broken wings to the bat in the fridge to a continuous stream of cat-kittens to the snakes that lived in the glass cages which had been made for them.

I learned respect and companionship for these creatures, not fear; snakes were just another of the living beings I grew to understand as pets. I now think of them as emanating wisdom, health, and power from within. So remember to respect both the creepycrawly creatures of the earth and your own inner stirrings. And have a happy new snake-year.

Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily in accordance with those of the Women's Studies Department. We will print no racist, sexist or homophobic material.

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NEWSFLASH

Watch for "What is Women's Studies?" and a schedule of events in conjunction with International Women's Day in our next issue.



Pioneer Spirit: Women in Trades

by Michelle Gerrior

This is the job your mother warned you about.

Your mother warned you, your peers questioned you, and now your workmates harass you. They test your ability to do your job, or worse, they do everything for you and never let you prove how capable you are.

You are a woman in a male-dominated trade.

The Victoria Women in Trades Society (VWTS) encourages and supports women in the trades or in technology fields. Member Jean Willow is the project manager for "Women in Construction," a job development program initiated by VWTS for women receiving social assistance.

"Social assistance can make people feel like victims," says Willow. "The two main reasons people are on social assistance are that they lack training and that there is a lack of support for single parents." Keeping in mind also the lack of jobs and an insufficient minimum wage, it is not surprising that so many women have no alternative to a monthly government cheque.

The first of its kind in Victoria, the 22 week program which began January 23 will train eight women in a construction-related trade and provide work experi-

ence. VWTS elicited funding from Canada Employment and has contracted the Interurban Campus of Camosun College to supply classrooms and instruction for the first eight weeks of the program.

The women will be taught basic skills in work safety, tool identification and carpentry, and will work on small projects. In addition, they will learn math and life skills to supplement the trade theory.

"We'll be teaching them life skills such as self-defense, assertiveness, communication, problem solving, and time and stress management," adds Willow.

But self-defense on the work site? Is it really that bad?

"We don't expect women will need to defend themselves at work," Willow explains. "The self-defense training will help strengthen them and give them confidence."

The women will spend the remainder of the program working for contractors around the city. Several contractors have been chosen already.

Willow says the response to her calls has been mixed. "One fellow I talked to became defensive and hung up on me," she recalls. "Another was very enthusiastic. He had hired a woman before and said she was the best worker he had ever had. He said he would hire a woman anytime."

During the work period, the women will be doing renovations and construction and some may build framing for lighting fixtures and other "ceiling jobs." They will operate such machinery as skill-saws, radial arm saws, and pneumatic hammers. When the program is over it will be the women's personal determination as well as contractors' openness to women workers which will decide if they take a full-time job in a trades-related industry.

"They could end up working for the city, or in hardware or lumber. I remember walking into a hardware store and a woman was working there. She knew everything about all the tools and everything they sold. I felt really good to meet a woman with that knowledge."

According to Willow, only one to two percent of construction workers are women, and this program is a "drop in the bucket to equal that out."

There used to be over 20 college trade courses for women in B.C. Now there are two. Canada Employment will not let colleges advertise courses such as women's introductions to trades programs because there is allegedly no demand and no need shown for them.

"It would enhance and support women going into non-traditional occupations if there were a regularly funded program," purports Willow. However, there will be no regularly funded program without a waiting list and as trade courses for women are not advertised, most women do not know about the course, hitherto no waiting list.

Willow says the funding was cut because of politics, not because there is no interest in these courses.

"As far as I can tell, what it comes down to is politics and lack of public awareness. Everything depends on who is in power and how the money is directed." *

photo by Ann Meredith



photo by Nita Winter

Willard: "Who has so great a stake in the government as the nation's motherhood?" Thus women had little difficulty in reconciling their role of mother with that of activist. They were courageous women, unafraid to speak out on unpopular causes. I admire them all." *

AS WISE AS SERPENTS



AS WISE AS SERPENTS:
1883 - 1939

Five Women and an
Organization that changed
British Columbia

By Lyn Gough
Swan Lake Publishing, 1988

As Wise As Serpents zeros in on five women — Maria Grant, Helen Grant, Margaret Jenkins, Emma Spencer, and Cecilia Spofford — who formed a core collective of the B.C. Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).

Through an interdisciplinary approach (economics-history-philosophy-politics-sociology-women's studies) we learn who these women were via Gough's comprehensive synthesis of the events they caused to happen. Indeed, Gough dedicates her work "to the Memory of Pioneer Women of the West."

Lynn Gough, Ba.BSc. (hons), M.Sc. (Wales), who moved to Victoria in 1980, says that the research for this project (which she began in 1984) is drawn primarily from the B.C. Women's Christian Temperance Union Year Books, newspapers, provincial journals, statutes, and sessional papers. She skilfully weaves together the lives of women in Victoria's past, making this text an excellent reference to powerful and organized exemplars in local women's herstory.

So if there's any her/history/sociology/political science students out there suffering from sexist course content, I highly recommend *As Wise As Serpents* for a scholarly woman's perspective on our foremother's lives. These highly inspirational women walked on the same ground we now walk on and assisted in making many things possible for us today (including access to "higher education"!).

It appears that the secret to these women's success was in their ability to work together, even to think together (an exceptional skill which helps keep the cogs of societal change running smoothly). In Gough's own analysis: "The moral superiority of women formed the cornerstone of the WCTU philosophy, a view in many ways consistent with the Victorian era where women were often regarded as virtuous and worthy of pedestals. The WCTU decreed that pure-minded women would set the standards for society."

"As mothers, or potential mothers, women bore the ultimate responsibility for society — for molding the ideals of youth, and therefore the nation. Said Francis



I fully admit to being an antichrist.
I know they will say I'm blasphemous, or
ridiculous, but I know.
I don't see it as bad, Just the way
it is.
He was a man, I am a woman.
He was feminine, gentle as silk
I am masculine, shocking as a shaved head
He was a lamb, I am a lion
He a son, I a daughter.
Opposites, Christ. Antichrist.
Neither of us believed in hierarchies.
He associated with men, I with women
each with our own kind.
Just as anyone can be a christ, anyone can
be an antichrist.
I have another name for it,
antichrist is full of hate
as a word, tainted by the christian church
as is woman's name.
It is time now to Claim
for me for us for the Goddess in us.
He in a holy land built with women's hands
I in a land of holes dug by men's machines.
I smile quietly to myself when I think of my father
who is a carpenter.
I too shall be persecuted for my beliefs,
but it isn't going to stop me.
This is not to say I'm arrogant
or that I have a messiah complex, Just
to say that I am.

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